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Cap 4

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, U. S. D. A.

SS - 28

MARCH 12, 1945

SHARP DECREASE IN LIVESTOCK NUMBERS

Annual livestock inventory as of January 1 showed marked decline in numbers last year. During 1944, number of cattle decreased from 82.3 million head to 81.8 million; hogs from 83.8 million to 60.7 million; sheep from 51.8 million to 47.9 million; milk cows alone held their own in numbers, 27.7 million to 27.8 million; but there was a record slaughter of calves.

Total farm value of livestock, including poultry, fell from \$9.5 billion a year ago to \$8.9 at beginning of 1945.

FEWER GRAIN-EATING ANIMALS

The number of grain-consuming animals (horses, mules, cattle, sheep, hogs & chickens), expressed in turns of animal units - each unit equivalent to 1 cow - stood at 147 million this January, compared with a peak of 171 million in January 1944, with 160 million in 1943 and a low of 120 million in 1935.

Thus the upswing in livestock production, which went on from 1938 up to 1944, was reversed last year and set into a sharp decline.

MORE MATURE CATTLE THAN YEAR AGO BUT FEWER CALVES

The number of steers on farms & ranches increased 158,000 last year and totaled 7.6 million head this Jan. 1. The number of beef cows and heifers also increased almost 600,000 in the year. Number of milk cows also increased slightly (.5 percent), standing at 27.8 million head this January - an all-time high.

Calf numbers, off 7 percent in the year, showed sharpest decrease ever recorded; stood at 19.1 million head this January, compared with 20.5 million year previous. Calf slaughter last year was around 14 million head, a record.

11 PERCENT FEWER CHICKENS

Number of chickens on farms fell 11 percent, from 576 million year ago to 511 million this year. (Turkeys decreased only slightly, 7.6 million to 7.5 million). Lower egg and higher feed prices last year presumably the main reason. Flocks this January averaged 59 percent pullets, 33 percent hens, 8 percent other chickens. Whereas chickens are on the decline, holdings of turkey breeder hens are 6 percent above last year.

THE VANISHING HORSE

Draft animals have been declining steadily in favor of mechanical power. Number horses & colts decreased last

year from 9.3 million to 8.9 million, smallest since 1874. Number mules down from 3.5 to 3.4 million. Average farm value of horses this year \$65, down about \$14 below previous year - help shortages makes demand for tractors rather than horses. Number colts raised in 1944 estimated 372,000, fewest in the 25 years of record. At present rate of decline, will be about 10 million horses & mules on farms & ranches by 1950, compared with 12.4 million now and high point of 26.7 million in 1917.

DAIRY PRODUCTION

Production of milk on farms in 1944 amounted to 119.2 billion pounds, compared with 118.1 in 1943 and 103.6 billion for the 1935-39 average. Output of creamery butter 1,486 million pounds in 1944, compared with 1,673 million in 1943 and 1,691 million for the average. American cheese production 800 million pounds in 1944, compared with 765 million in 1943 and 509 million average. Evaporated and condensed milk output 3,757 million pounds in 1944, compared with 3,352 in 1943 and 2,225 million the average.

Present forecasts suggest slightly less total milk output for 1945, slightly less butter, slightly more cheese and condensed and evaporated milk.

DECREASING WOOL PRODUCTION

Production of wool, shorn and pulled, in 1944 estimated 418 million pounds, of which 384 million pounds was shorn and around 65 million pulled wool. This compares with 450 million pounds in 1943 and a ten year average (1933-42) of 434 million. The number of sheep shorn in 1944 was estimated at 44.3 million head, about 9 percent fewer than were shorn in 1943. The average weight of fleece in 1944 was 7.83 pounds, compared with 7.91 pounds in 1943.

MARKETING CHARGES

Charges for marketing a family market basket of farm foods amounted to \$218 in January, same as in December. This represented a decline of about 2 percent from previous January but was 8 percent above the 1935-39 average of \$201.

The farmer's share of the consumer's dollar spent for farm foods stood at 55 cents in January, same as in December. This share equalled the record high of 1918.

Retail cost of the family market basket of foods (average for family of three) rose from \$453 in December to \$455 in January 1945,

PARITY PRICES FOR FARM PRODUCTS AND ACTUAL PRICES RECEIVED

| COMMODITY AND UNIT | ACTUAL PRICE | | PARITY PRICE |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| | JAN. 15 1945 | FEB. 15 1945 | FEB. 15 1945 |
| Wheat, bu. dol. | 1.46 | 1.47 | 1.52 |
| Corn, bu. dol. | 1.07 | 1.06 | 1.10 |
| Oats, bu. dol. | .72 | .73 | .686 |
| Cotton, lb. ct. | 20.20 | 19.19 | 21.33 |
| Potatoes, bu. dol. | 1.58 | 1.65 | 1.25 |
| Hogs, 100 lb. dol. | 13.80 | 14.00 | 12.50 |
| Beef cattle, 100 lb. . . dol. | 11.70 | 12.10 | 9.32 |
| Veal calves, 100 lb. . . dol. | 13.20 | 13.60 | 11.60 |
| Lambs, 100 lb. dol. | 13.00 | 13.60 | 10.10 |
| Butterfat, lb. ct. | 50.9 | 50.8 | ¹ 46.3 |
| Milk, wholesale, 100 lb. . dol. | 3.35 | 3.31 | ¹ 2.82 |
| Chickens, live, lb. . . . ct. | 24.2 | 24.5 | 19.6 |
| Eggs, doz. ct. | 41.0 | 35.8 | ¹ 34.0 |

¹Adjusted for seasonal variation.

matching high point of 1944.

MORE GRAIN FEED BUT LESS HAY

Stocks of corn and oats on farms, at terminal markets, and Government owned, January 1, were equal to about .49 ton per grain-consuming animal unit on farms. This quantity was 26 percent more than a year earlier, but was slightly less than in preceding 3 years of large supplies. Stocks of hay on farms, January 1, per hay-consuming animal unit, were 1 percent smaller than a year previous and 7 percent below average for that date during 1939-43.

FARM PRODUCT PRICES DOWN A LITTLE

General prices received by farmers for their products stood at an index of 199 percent of prewar (1909-14 taken as 100) in mid-February. This was a decline of 2 points from the previous month and compared with 195 a year previous. Farm product prices averaged 116 percent of parity, compared with 117 in January and 115 in February last year. Marked declines were shown from the previous month in indexes of truck crops, eggs, dairy products and cotton. Food grains remained at 169, fruit rose 6 points to 211, meat animals up 6 to 209. Cotton, corn and wheat prices were still below parity in mid-February but most other major products were well above.

RECORD ORANGE CROP

Record orange crop, 105 million boxes, estimated for 1944-45, compared with 103 million year ago and 85 million in 1942-43. Florida tangerine crop placed at 4,100,000 boxes, half a million more than last season but 100,000 less than in 1942-43. Total grapefruit output estimated 51,191,000 boxes, compared with last season's record crop of 55,979,000 boxes and 50,481,000 produced in 1942-43. Prospective California lemon crop 13,321,000 boxes, 21 percent above last year but 11 percent below the 1942-43 crop of 14,940,000 boxes.

MORE MOHAIR

Mohair production in the 7 leading states in 1944 estimated at 20,581,000 pounds, which was 2 percent increase over the 20,196,000 pounds produced in 1943, and 14 percent above the ten year average (1933-42). The number of goats clipped in 1944 was 4,130,000 head, smallest number since 1939; compared with 4,284,000 clipped in 1943. Average quantity of hair per goat and kid clipped was 5.0 pounds in 1944, compared with 4.7 pounds in 1943.

MEAT PRODUCTION

Number cattle slaughtered under Federal inspection in January 1945 was 1284 thousand head, compared with 1141 thousand in January 1944. Number calves slaughtered

560 thousand, compared with 468 thousand year ago. Hogs slaughtered 5299 thousand head, compared with 7839 thousand year ago. Sheep and lambs 2073 thousand, compared with 1933 thousand last year. Thus it will be seen that slaughter of cattle, calves, sheep and lambs is running considerably higher this winter than last, while the slaughter of hogs has fallen off sharply.

The total dressed weight of meat (excluding condemned) represented by the above slaughter figures in January was as follows: beef 618 million pounds, compared with 582 million a year previous; veal 60 million pounds, compared with 49 million year ago; pork (carcass weight) 978 million, compared with 1476 million year ago; pork, excluding lard, 761 million, compared with 1112 million year ago; lamb and mutton 90 million, compared with 81 million year ago.

Cattle and hogs are running lighter weights this winter than last, while calves average heavier. Average live weights this January: cattle 940 pounds, compared with 969 pounds year previous; hogs 244 pounds, compared with 249 year ago; calves 198 pounds, compared with 191 pounds last year.

NUMBER FARM WORKERS DOWN

Number of workers on farms February 1 totaled 8,051,000, about 4 percent under year previous and 11 percent below February average 1935-39. Employment was lowest for date in two decades of record, a fact perhaps partly due to bad weather. Number of family workers 6,557,000 or a decline of 14,000 in a month, and compared with 6,702,000 the previous February. Number hired workers increased 60,000 during month to a total of 1,494,000 by February 1, compared with 1,681,000 year previous. Both family and hired workers are lowest February numbers of record.

Number foreign workers on farms (transported by WFA) Jan. 31, 1945: Mexicans 29,590, Jamaicans 4,250, Bahamians 4,580, Newfoundlanders 791.

FARMERS' INCOME

Farmers' cash receipts during January 1945 from products sold amounted to \$1,630 million, compared with \$1,628 million the previous January. These figures included \$70 million of Government payments this January, compared with \$92 million year previous.

| CURRENT INDEXES FOR AGRICULTURE | | |
|--|--------------------------|------------------|
| INDEX NUMBERS | BASE PERIOD | FEBRUARY 1945 |
| Prices received by farmers . . | 1910-14 = 100 | 199 |
| Prices paid by farmers, interest and taxes | 1910-14 = 100 | 172 |
| Parity ratio | 1910-14 = 100 | 116 |
| Wholesale prices of food . . | 1910-14 = 100 | 163 |
| Retail prices of food . . . | 1910-14 = 100 | ¹ 177 |
| Farm wage rates | 1910-14 = 100 | 324 |
| Weekly factory earnings . . . | 1910-14 = 100 | ² 429 |
| RATIOS | LONG-TIME FEB. - AVERAGE | FEBRUARY 1945 |
| Hog-corn ratio, U. S. . . . | 12.5 | 13.2 |
| Butterfat-feed ratio, U. S. . | 24.8 | 26.4 |
| Milk-feed ratio, U. S. . . . | 1.27 | 1.49 |
| Egg-feed ratio, U. S. . . . | 11.6 | 12.5 |
| PRODUCTION COMPARISONS | JAN. - DEC. 1943 | JAN. - DEC. 1944 |
| Milk, (Bil. lb.) | 118.1 | 119.2 |
| Eggs, (Bil.) | 54.2 | 57.5 |
| Beef, (Dr. wt., mil. lb.) . . | 5,970 | 6,665 |
| Lamb & Mutton (Dr. wt., mil. lb.) | 958 | 887 |
| Pork & Lard (Mil. lb.) . . . | 12,161 | 12,698 |
| All meats (Dr. wt., mil. lb.) | 19,686 | 21,166 |

¹January figure.

²Factory pay roll per employed worker adjusted for seasonal variation.

For more detailed information, write the Division of Economic Information, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C., or telephone Republic 4142-Branch 4407.